

Washington Association of Conservation Districts

October 20, 2025

Summary of Motions

- **Motion:** Alan Chapman moved to adopt the draft agenda. Second by Barbara Bailey. Motion carried.
- **Motion:** Alan Chapman moved to adopt the September meeting minutes as presented. Second by Cindy Reed. Motion carried.
- **Motion:** Doug Rushton moved to accept the Treasurer's Report. Second by Barbara Bailey. Motion carried.
- **Motion:** Craig Nelson moved to approve contracting with KR Creative Strategies to develop a toolkit based on staff recommendations, with a not-to-exceed amount of \$4,000. Second by David Vliet. Motion carried.
- **Motion:** Craig Nelson moved to create a Task Force to review the current WACD dues structure and develop a proposal for the 2026 Annual Meeting. Second by David Vliet. The motion was adopted with an abstention by Alan Chapman.
- **Motion:** Alan Chapman moved to approve the proposed strategic plan. Second by Craig Nelson. Motion carried.
- **Motion:** Jeff Schibel moved to approve a MOU with USDA-NRCS. Second by Cindy Reed. Motion carried.
- **Motion:** Bruce McDonald moved to adopt the proposed Ways & Means Committee policy language. Second by Jeff Schibel. Motion carried.
- **Motion:** Craig Nelson moved to select Skamania Lodge as the venue for the 2026 and 2027 Annual Conferences, with the dates to be selected by WACD staff. Second by Heather Smith. Motion carried.
- **Motion:** Amy McKay moved to approve hosting the 2027 NACD Summer & Regional Meetings. Second by Cindy Reed. Motion carried.

Washington Association of Conservation Districts

WACD Executive Office – Olympia, WA

Remote Connection through Zoom

October 20, 2025

Board Meeting Minutes

Members Present

Amy McKay, President (Whitman CD)
Jeff Schibel, Vice President (Lincoln County CD)
Barbara Bailey, Secretary (Underwood CD)
Doug Rushton, National Director (Thurston CD)
Alan Chapman, Northwest Area Director (Whatcom CD)
David Vliet, Northwest Area Director (Kitsap CD)
Heather Smith, Southwest Area Director (Grays Harbor CD)
Bruce McDonald, Southwest Area Director (Lewis CD)
John McLean, North Central Area Director (Foster Creek CD)
Cindy Reed, South Central Area Director (North Yakima CD)
John W. Floyd, Northeast Area Director (Pend Oreille CD)
Mary Collins, Southeast Area Director (Palouse CD)
Craig Nelson, Washington Association of District Employees (Okanogan CD)

Others Present

Tom Salzer, WACD Executive Director
Heather Wendt, WACD Deputy Director
John Knox, WACD Nursery Manager
Ryan Baye, WACD Director of Legislative & Membership Services
Sarah Moorehead, Thurston CD Executive Director
Kris Neely, Spokane CD Associate Supervisor

President Amy McKay called the meeting to order at 6:01 pm. Ryan Baye conducted a roll call of members, staff, and guests present to confirm a quorum was present. Alan Chapman moved to adopt the draft agenda. Second by Barbara Bailey. Motion carried.

No one present entered a public comment.

Meeting Minutes

Secretary Barbara Bailey presented the minutes from the September board meeting. Alan Chapman moved to adopt the September meeting minutes as presented. Second by Cindy Reed. Motion carried.

Treasurer's Report

Heather Wendt presented the treasurer's report on behalf of Mark Craven. She noted the increase in PMC revenue before the start of their sales season was due to the 25% plant

deposit from customers; she also noted funds taken from reserves for the purchase of a new tractor and repairs done to the plant cooler. Doug Rushton moved to accept the Treasurer's Report. Second by Barbara Bailey. Motion carried.

Heather Wendt shared a proposal from KR Creative Strategies based on \$4,000 in supplemental dues income to create a marketing toolkit for districts around Conservation Technical Assistance and Forest Health/Wildfire Resiliency. There were questions about how to evaluate the toolkit's effectiveness, reducing costs by using AI, the likelihood of redirecting funding from DNR to conservation districts, and the rise of short-form video content over infographics on social media. Craig Nelson moved to approve contracting with KR Creative Strategies to develop a toolkit based on staff recommendations, with a not-to-exceed amount of \$4,000. Second by David Vliet. Motion carried.

Heather Wendt reported that all forty-five conservation districts had paid their 2025 dues.

WACD Correspondence

Dave Hedrick spoke to the Ferry Conservation District's letter to WACD regarding future dues payments. He shared details of their financial projects and their concern about districts being asked to all pay the same amount despite being in different financial situations. He acknowledged the difficulty of balancing the need for WACD funding versus districts' need to make ends meet amidst unstable revenue streams.

The following discussion included information about the 2019 WACD bylaw change to a flat rate system, ensuring all districts had a voice in the association despite financial differences, how other state membership entities handled dues, changing WACD's funding model, and WACD funding levels. Craig Nelson moved to create a Task Force to review the current WACD dues structure and develop a proposal for the 2026 Annual Meeting. Second by David Vliet. There was additional discussion about proposing potential changes for the 2025 Annual Business Meeting, the reduction in spending power with no increase to WACD dues for several years, and ensuring predictability for conservation district budgets. The motion was adopted with an abstention by Alan Chapman.

WACD Operations

John Knox discussed the PMC staff's plan to do promotions on plant species not already sold out, the effectiveness of the work crew, and the initial harvest results.

Heather Wendt presented the draft 2026 Strategic Plan and the response from member-districts. Alan Chapman moved to approve the proposed strategic plan. Second by Craig Nelson. Motion carried.

Heather Wendt sought feedback from the board on a proposal in the strategic plan about a potential WACD Fundraising Committee to address shortfalls between WACD's operational goals and current financial resources. It was recommended that this work be done by the dues task force.

Heather Wendt asked for approval of a statewide Memorandum of Understanding with the USDA- NRCS. Jeff Schibel moved to approve the MOU. Second by Cindy Reed. Motion carried.

Tom Salzer and Amy McKay proposed an increase to Heather Wendt's salary at the 6-month mark of her promotion to Deputy Director. They both outlined the many ways she had exceeded expectations and the many responsibilities she had taken on. Craig Nelson moved to set Heather Wendt's salary \$100,000. Second by Jeff Schibel. There was discussion about comparable salaries for "department directors" at conservation districts. Cindy Reed moved to amend the motion to backdate Heather's salary increase to her start date as Deputy Director and received a second. The motion was withdrawn at Heather Wendt's request. Motion carried.

Committee Updates

Heather Wendt presented committee reports from the Sustainable Funding Committee, CTD Funding Workgroup, and the SCC Ombudsman Workgroup.

Ryan Baye sought volunteers for the WACD Awards Committee, looking for a committee member in each region. Doug Rushton volunteered to be the Western Area's representative.

Ryan Baye presented policy language for the Ways & Means Committee, with a timeline to have committee members in place after the 2025 resolutions were adopted. Bruce McDonald moved to adopt the proposed Ways & Means Committee policy language. Second by Jeff Schibel. Motion carried.

WACD Events

Ryan Baye shared the outcomes from the Northwest and Southwest Area Meetings the previous week. He also shared updates on the progress of the 2025 Annual Conference.

Ryan Baye presented proposals from two venues wishing to host the 2026 and 2027 WACD Annual Conference. He outlined the differences in the two venues' proposed contracts, the amenities at each facility, and comparisons to the current venue in Spokane. Craig Nelson moved to select Skamania Lodge as the venue for the 2026 and 2027 Annual Conferences, with the dates to be selected by WACD staff. Second by Heather Smith. There were comments made by those who had been to both venues, and the potential for increased community events at a more isolated location like Skamania Lodge. Motion carried.

Heather Wendt relayed the details of a proposal from NACD for Washington to host the 2027 Summer meeting as well as the 2027 Pacific & Southwest regional meeting. She noted that doing a joint event would mean NACD's contractor would be doing the bulk of the work. Amy McKay moved to approve hosting the 2027 NACD Summer & Regional Meetings. Second by Cindy Reed. Motion carried.

Announcements

Doug Rushton announced outcomes from the NACD Natural Resources Committee Meeting earlier that day.

Ryan Baye announced he would be out of the county between October 28 and November 10th.

Bruce McDonald announced long-time supervisor Dave Fenn had resigned from Lewis CD.

President Amy McKay adjourned the meeting at 8:44 pm.